

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph on page 25, line 29 with the following amended paragraph:

Text data may be checked by a computer using the keyword search described above and image data may be presented to the operator. Image data may be checked by a computer. By applying a photo developing technique, ~~whether or not~~ the appropriateness of the image can be judged. An extremely dark image or an unclear image, for example, is detected.

Please replace the paragraph on page 30, line 11 with the following amended paragraph:

Fig. 19 shows the flow of purchasing goods mainly from the buyer's side. ~~(1)~~ (1a)
Accessing a virtual shop: A buyer visits the Web site of an operator of the virtual shopping mall by using a terminal that can gain access to the Internet, such as a personal computer or a cellular phone. A buyer is not required to register a membership specifically.

Please replace the paragraph on page 30, line 17 with the following amended paragraph:

~~(2)~~ (2a) Searching goods: A buyer searches desired goods on the Web site. The buyer is then presented with the desired goods.

Please replace the paragraph on page 30, line 20 with the following amended paragraph:

(3) (3a) Ordering goods: When the buyer finds the desired goods, the buyer presses the order button on a terminal. When the screen page for selecting a shop is displayed in response to this operation, the buyer selects an appropriate shop as a place for receiving the purchased goods. When a buyer makes an order, the buyer discloses his/her email address to the virtual shopping mall operations apparatus E by using a terminal base unit.

Please replace the paragraph on page 30, line 28 with the following amended paragraph:

(4) (4a) Notifying the stock: The buyer receives a notice of whether or not the goods are in stock. Checking the stock is undertaken between the operator of the virtual shopping mall and the seller. If the goods are in stock, the buyer enters into the waiting state of delivery. If the goods are not in stock, no trade is reached.

Please replace the paragraph on page 31, line 4 with the following amended paragraph:

(5) (5a) The notice for arrival of the purchased goods: The buyer receives an e-mail that notifies the arrival of the purchased goods at the designated shop. This e-mail includes a trade ID.

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Please replace the paragraph on page 31, line 8 with the following amended paragraph:

~~(6)~~ (6a) Purchasing goods: The buyer visits the designated shop to receive the purchased goods, taking the trade ID with him/her. The buyer presents the trade ID to a sales clerk, receives the purchased goods, and makes payment. The payment is transmitted to an appropriate place, such as the headquarters of the chain store.